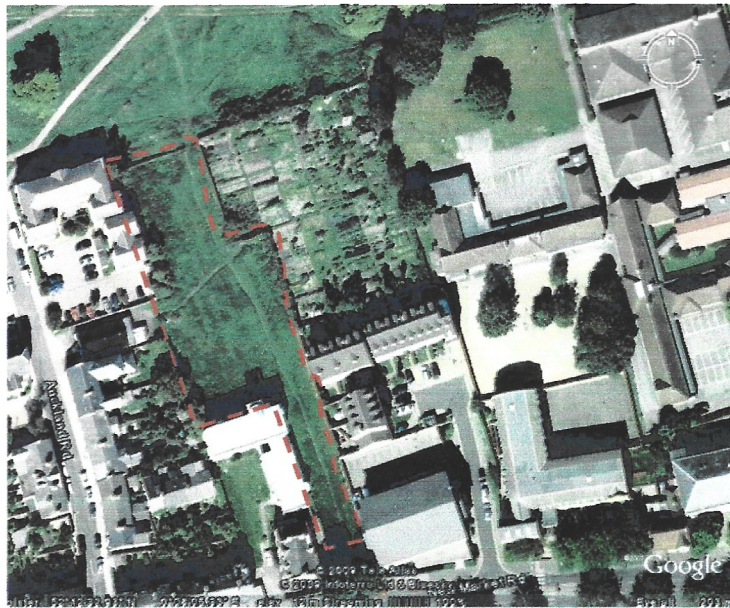


BACKGROUND

- Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust was commissioned in 2008 to produce a Management plan for Midsummer Common. Consultation was undertaken with stakeholders of the site, which included Council Officers, Friends of Midsummer Common, Brunk and the current grazier.
- The establishment of a community orchard within the Southern Pound (see plan) was one of a number of recommendations made within the Management Plan.
- This pound area is currently used as a temporary holding area for the cattle when the common is being used for short-term events, which last one – two days. Discussion is required with the Pinder, but it is felt the Eastern pound area could fulfil this role in the future.



LAND ISSUES

- The land is registered as Common land under the 1965 Commons Act, as shown on Cambridgeshire Country Council definitive plans.
- Initial discussions with Head of Legal Services and Head of Property Services indicate that it is believed there are no legal restrictions as to why this land couldn't be used as for the purposes of a Community Orchard.
- Current access rights through this area of the common will be unaffected.

PROCESS

- A total of 40 trees would be planted over a phased planting programme (three stages). The trees would be staked, tied and mulched as per young tree maintenance guidelines.
- Volunteer group would be developed with Friends and Brunk with the support of the Council and Wildlife Trust. The group will be involved in planting and maintenance of the orchard. (As well as other tasks on the common such as meadow area) (Insurance can be provided through BTCV)

TIMESCALES

- Tree planting season is October – March
- Friends of Midsummer Common may wish to identify tree stock in the coming weeks to ensure they have the quantity, quality and variety required, although financial commitment should not be made until permission is given.
- Consultation with Local residents, Allotment Holders and internal stakeholders to be undertaken by the Council during October and concluded by early November, with the completion of a report by mid November.
- Agreement in writing between the Council and Friends to be formulated and approved, giving permission for use of land and practical issues concerning the management of the site. Timescale for a final decision will be by mid December at the latest or earlier if West Central Area Committee is willing to agree in principle to the grant and the conditions in 2.a. below, at its meeting on 15th October.

OPTIONS

We suggest:

1. Approval in principle for the grant request by Friends of Midsummer Common to enable the planting of a Community Orchard is given at West/Central Committee on 15th October, subject to;
 - a. Permission for use of land formally given by Executive Cllr for Arts & Recreation as a formal decision.
 - b. Consultation with local residents, Allotment Holders and internal departments such as the Arboricultural, Nature Conservation and Street Scene to inform the Executive Councillor's decision.
2. A report will be produced based on the results of the consultation by mid November, which could be either;
 - a. Emailed to West/Central Committee members to give their views electronically prior to an out of cycle decision.
 - b. Formally presented at West/Central Committee on 10th December for final consideration / approval prior to an out of cycle decision.

West Central committee will be asked for their views on how they wish to proceed at the meeting on 15th October.